

A PERIOD OF ARMED TRUCE

As a result, many arrests were made among the Bloc's members and some of its more active leaders were killed.²⁷ We do not know what happened at that time to Rusta, although there are indications that he sought refuge in Russia and was later arrested and jailed in Iran under the regime of Reza Shah.²⁸ As to Suleiman Mirza, he continued as a deputy to the Majlis; and when Reza Shah overthrew the Qajar dynasty in 1935, he and his left-wing group of fifteen deputies voted in favor of recognizing Reza as Shah of Iran.²⁹ This seemingly strange behavior in favor of a man who had been instrumental in arresting their comrades two years earlier, can be explained by the fact that Reza's coup represented, after all, a bourgeois tendency opposed to the old feudal regime, and thus, despite everything, constituted a step forward.

The vote in favor of Reza Shah was apparently the last open act of a group working in liaison with or at least sympathetic with some of the aims professed by the Communists. Reza Shah might have been regarded with approval by Soviet theoreticians as the representative of a national liberation movement of anti-imperialist tinge, but that approval did not lead him to reciprocate in his attitude toward Communism. On the contrary, during his regime energetic measures were taken against the Communists and even against leftist liberals, who in Reza's thinking represented subversive groups dangerous to the unity of Iran. Gradually all political parties and groups disappeared to make way for the ever-growing military dictatorship of the new Shah. The same fate befell the press, so that ultimately only four newspapers were permitted to appear in Teheran, and none of them

was allowed to express views critical of the government. Independent trade unions were also liquidated, which, incidentally, caused the International Labor Organization to question the genuineness of the Iranian workers' representation in that body. Under these conditions the Communist party was driven underground. In fact, to an outside observer it was difficult to see anything on the surface of Iranian life that pertained to Communism. The Soviet press and publications became very reticent about the activities of the party

²⁷ Gurko-Kriazhin, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

²⁸ As to his activities during World War II, see Chapters Eight and Eleven.

²⁹ Gurko-Kriazhin, *op. cit.*, p. 25.